

### **Media Coverage of Turkey's Actions to Better Human Rights and Civil Liberties**

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#### **Al-Monitor**

[Can Turkey correct human rights record with new justice reform strategy?](#)

By: Orhan Kemal Cengiz

June 4, 2019

The Turkish Ministry of Justice released its "Judicial Reform Strategy" document on May 30. Minister of Justice Abdulhamit Gul said the report took a full year to prepare and that over 20,000 people were consulted. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan suggested that the reform strategy puts Turkey on track for compliance with the EU accession process. Yet the EU Commission's annual progress report for Turkey this year, published May 29, contained its harshest criticism of Turkey's human rights record yet.

Does the Judicial Reform Strategy have the potential to change the course of Turkey's human rights record? Can it be read as a sign of a shift in Turkey from authoritarianism to democracy? Does it mean Turkey is moving closer toward Europe or away from it?

While introducing the strategy document on May 30, Erdogan said, "Though the promises made to us [by the EU] are not kept, we express our commitment to the process of full accession to the EU with this reform document."

The strategy promises reform across vast areas of the judicial sector, stating that "a clear and measurable action plan" will be prepared, in addition to the establishment of "a monitoring and evaluation board" within three months of publication. The proposed regulations outlined in the document have the potential to contribute to improved human rights and rule of law. Such measures include:

- Complying with the decisions of the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights.
- Reviewing and making necessary changes to the "methods of blocking access to the internet."
- Forming "a new domestic legal mechanism for examining applications for violations of the right to trial within a reasonable time."

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- Organizing "training courses [for members of the judiciary] on human rights, mainly freedom of expression and the press."
- Analyzing "the legislation on and practice of freedom of expression, and [introducing] provisions that further expand the rights and freedoms of individuals."
- Regulating "provisions regarding the maximum duration of imprisonment."
- Not relocating judges and prosecutors against their will.
- Relocating courts and public prosecution offices to separate offices.

The strategy also stated the judiciary's intent to establish "special courts" in the fields of environment, construction and energy; to introduce an entrance exam for attorneys; and to increase education in law faculties to five years.

The document elicited mixed reactions in Turkey.

Eren Keskin, the co-chair of the Turkish Human Rights Association, stated that when she first heard the document announced by President Erdogan, she thought she was in "wonderland," since, as Erdogan announced the reforms, the government was facing ongoing allegations of torture. Keskin has had 143 different legal cases brought against her for her statements and articles.

Some chairs of Turkey's bar associations were unimpressed by the report. Ozkan Yucel, chair of the Izmir Bar Association, tweeted, "The judicial reform does not happen by writing a strategy document. It happens by implementing the law."

Metin Feyzioglu, chair of the Union of Turkish Bar Associations, said, "I see it as the road map of Turkey alliance," adding that, "in no step were we excluded, we worked as the original component" of the process.

Apparently, the Union of Turkish Bar Associations somehow influenced the reports and its stipulations, like its promise to issue lawyers Green Passports, which are issued to certain government employees for visa-free travel.

The Justice Reform Strategy is a comprehensive document promising serious reform. The Ministry of Justice clearly spent a lot of time and energy preparing it. In this sense, it can be said that there is a strong will behind the document.

However, something fundamental is lacking in this document: At no point does it acknowledge Turkey's serious human rights problems. Every step toward reform is referred to as a continuation of alleged positive developments.

For example, the strategy document refers to problems related to freedom of expression as follows: "In the last sixteen years, important steps have been taken toward promoting freedom expression and media in Turkey." And torture: "There are no claims of past systematic torture or ill treatment."

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This core deficiency gives rise to doubts that the document will have any serious effects on the ground or create real change in Turkey.

When reading the European Commission's progress report on Turkey, one encounters a different reality. "Allegations of torture and ill treatment remain a serious concern," the report reads. "The handling of complaints of torture and ill treatment is also reported to be ineffective, and allegedly entails a risk of reprisal."

The European report states that in terms of freedom of expression, "serious backsliding continued." It continues that "the high number of arrests of journalists — over 160 journalists remain in prison — is of very serious concern."

Questions remain: Can a country solve its problems without first acknowledging them? If we accept, as Keskin suggests, that we live in a wonderland, then how can we change our reality?

#### **Al Jazeera**

[Turkey's Erdogan reveals new judicial reforms amid bid to join EU](#)

By: Andrew Wilks

May 30, 2019

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday unveiled a package of judicial reforms after years of criticism over a crackdown on dissidents and the jailing of thousands said to be linked to a 2016 coup attempt.

Speaking from his palace in Ankara, the president took aim at the European Union, which a day earlier released a damning report on Turkey's bid to join the union.

In its annual progress review, the European Commission, the executive branch of the EU, accused Ankara of "serious backsliding in the areas of the rule of law and fundamental rights".

Erdogan, who oversaw the start of accession talks in 2005, reaffirmed his commitment to EU membership while striking a note of reproach. "We implement the reforms not because the EU wants them but because our nation needs them," he said in the televised address.

Since the failed coup, Turkey has jailed more than 77,000 people on suspicion of links to the group it says organised the attempt. About 150,000 civil servants, teachers, journalists, police officers, military personnel and others have been sacked or suspended from their jobs over alleged support for Fethullah Gulen, a US-based scholar, who Erdogan says orchestrated the putsch.

Gulen denies any involvement in the coup attempt, which led to at least 250 deaths, while critics of the government say the crackdown has been used to stifle all forms of dissent.

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The judicial reform package, which was designed after consultation with legal experts and human rights groups, aimed to "strengthen our nation's sense of justice", Erdogan said.

While going into some detail on issues such as the training of lawyers and prosecutors, he gave little insight into how Turkey - ranked 109th out of 126 countries in the World Justice Project's 2019 Rule of Law Index - would address criticism on issues such as the jailing of critical journalists, or the conviction of hundreds for insulting the president.

Ozturk Turkdogan, chair of the Turkish Human Rights Association, one of the groups consulted over the reforms, reacted with caution to Erdogan's speech.

While welcoming the "positive step" he added: "We have to wait for the relevant concrete draft laws to be tabled at the parliament in order to make a detailed evaluation and assessment of the strategy and roadmap."

Turkdogan, who was himself arrested in 2017 while taking part in a protest, also called for a "new and democratic constitution based on the principle of separation of powers founded on the rule of law".

Erdogan, who has been accused of concentrating power over the judiciary in his own hands, said the reforms had been drafted "within the framework of enhancing the independence and impartiality of justice" and to "effectively protect the right to a fair trial".

Among those imprisoned or who lost their jobs have been more than 4,460 judges and prosecutors, according to the Turkey Purge website, which collates figures from government announcements.

Selim Sazak, a researcher at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs in the US, said the judiciary urgently needed an overhaul to face the heavy workload created by the rate of arrests, as well as increasing numbers of bankruptcy cases as Turkey's economic crisis takes hold.

"In this current system, they have created political loyalty as not one of the main factors in judicial appointments, it's the only factor," he said. "Now, they need the system to work. They broke the system and don't know how to fix it so they're pushing every button."

Sazak added while some practical measures were likely to be implemented in the short term, there was a "massive dissonance" between Erdogan's rhetoric on fundamental rights and the recent record on jailing opponents.

Following the attempted coup, Turkey introduced emergency powers for two years that curbed many freedoms and, according to the rights groups, breached international obligations.

Although the emergency regime was lifted last year, new decrees allowed for the dismissal of judges and other officials if they are suspected of ties to groups such as the Gulen movement, which is listed as the Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation (FETO) under Turkish law.

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In recent weeks, the cancellation of opposition candidate Ekrem Imamoglu's win in the Istanbul mayoral race has further highlighted concerns for justice after the Supreme Election Council sided with the complaints of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party).

A second poll is to be held on June 23 that will again see Imamoglu, who is standing for the Republican People's Party (CHP), pitted against the AK Party's Binali Yildirim, a former prime minister.

According to polling company Konda, 72 percent of Turks see justice as a key issue for the country.

"It's obvious that the ruling bloc has caused an erosion in the sense of justice and conscience on the issue of the cancellation of polls," Konda General Manager Bekir Agirdir said in an interview with the leftist BirGun newspaper.

Few in Turkey doubt the justice system had been infiltrated by Gulenists, who were allied with the AK Party until a corruption case led by Gulenist prosecutors and police officers targeted Erdogan's close circle in late 2013.

"The July 2016 failed coup attempt by FETO led to a massive purge of FETO-related judicial personnel but they were, this time, substituted by judges and prosecutors loyal to the government," said Serkan Demirtas, a columnist for the Hurriyet daily.

### **Middle East Eye**

#### [Turkey elections: The main victor is democracy](#)

By: Yusuf Erim, Tanya Goudsouzian

April 2, 2019

Turkey's local elections have been billed by western media as a "setback" or "defeat" for the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP); others have dubbed it a "referendum on Erdogan".

For the first time in 25 years, a period that even predates the AKP, conservative politicians lost control of the capital Ankara to the left-wing opposition People's Republican Party (CHP), dealing a symbolic blow to the party led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Results for Istanbul have been too close to call yet.

For Turkey watchers, the victor emerging from these polls is the country's democratic process

Unofficial results have placed CHP in the lead, although the AK Party general secretariat is contesting the numbers, with former prime minister and mayoral candidate Binali Yildirim claiming there were nearly 300,000 invalid votes in Istanbul.

Still, based on unofficial figures suggesting three of Turkey's biggest cities are now under CHP control (coastal Izmir has always been a CHP stronghold), media pundits would be forgiven for attempting to paint this election as the beginning of the end for the AKP.

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For Turkey watchers, the victor emerging from these polls is the country's democratic process. Despite repeated characterisations of Turkey's "descent to autocracy", an 84 percent voter participation rate demonstrates that democracy in Turkey is hardly in jeopardy.

The poll results will be disputed for several more days – not unusual in any election anywhere in the world – but there are some key takeaways from Sunday's process. Turkey's High Electoral Commission is expected to release an unofficial final result on 13 April.

Voters across the country may come from different socio-economic backgrounds and espouse different ideologies, but the common denominator uniting voters were national concerns, not local issues. The votes reflected concerns on the economy and issues of national security.

These gave Sunday's local elections the overall feel of a general election.

The common denominator uniting voters were national concerns, not local issues

Campaign rhetoric from all sides centred very much on the idea of safeguarding the sovereignty of the state, hardly a slogan one hears in local elections.

The central theme of the People's Alliance – a union of the AKP and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) – was "the survival of the state and the nation".

The discourse equated the municipal elections with the survival of the state.

A second takeaway is the demographic and jurisdictional breakdown of the voters. While AKP's defeat in the three key cities was doubtless a hard blow to the party cadre and its supporters, it is still important to note they garnered close to 45 percent of the vote.

And, they still retain control over the majority of districts in Istanbul and Ankara. It is hard to suggest that the CHP gained a countrywide plurality. Rather, the plurality seemed to suggest a cosmopolitan vs non-cosmopolitan gulf widening over time.

Additionally, after 17 years in power, that the party is capable of garnering majority support is not insignificant and a credit to the durability of the ruling party.

The depiction of Turkish politics in black and white terms is both misleading and inaccurate. To begin with, the irony of the secular CHP's mayoral candidate's name – Ekrem Imamoglu (son of the Imam) – was not lost on voters.

In fact, CHP's success in Sunday's elections was its ability to reach out to Istanbul's more conservative quarters, a base normally inaccessible to them.

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They achieved this largely by abandoning strict party doctrines and selecting candidates based on result-oriented calculations, regardless of their ideologies and shifting the party from the left wing of the political spectrum closer to the centre.

Voters saw many candidates that were formerly associated with the AKP on the CHP side of the ballot. In Ankara, the opposition mayoral candidate Mansur Yavas was a former member of AKP's alliance partner MHP and is a name that is widely associated with right-wing politics.

The CHP also increased religious rhetoric throughout the election cycle, running an AKP-esque campaign to reach out to conservative voters. It looks like this trend may continue after elections as a celebration video showing Ankara candidate Mansur Yavas and his team celebrating by reciting takbirs (Muslim praise of God) was conveniently leaked to social media.

While Sunday's polls were a victory for the CHP, it is hardly a landslide for change. The CHP was successful, but the party's success should not be exaggerated and early elections to challenge the legitimacy of the ruling party would be foolhardy.

Ultimately the AKP still remains the number one party in the polls for a 15th consecutive election and the 51.62 percent support received by their Nation's Alliance with MHP is easily enough to sweep a general election, quite possibly even giving AKP a super majority in parliament.

When we further examine Sunday's results we can draw similarities to an American-style election where one party takes the popular vote and another party wins via electoral college votes. The vote distribution in key areas was favourable to CHP allowing for the opposition to vault past the governing party.

Results are an encouraging reminder to Turkish voters that they are the country's ultimate checks and balance system.

While all eyes were on Istanbul and Ankara Sunday night, another story was unveiling itself in Turkey's southeast – an area that is considered a stronghold of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP).

We can expect these local results to strengthen Erdogan's hand in talks with the US over a potential safe zone in northeast Syria

Voters surprised the HDP with shocking defeats, painting the cities of Sirnak, Bitlis and Agri in AKP orange on election maps, although the party held onto Diyarbakir and other strongholds, such as Siirt, Hakkari, Mardin and Van. Another big upset unfolded in the city of Tunceli as the Turkish Communist Party (TKP) candidate beat the HDP incumbent handing the TKP its first government seat in its 26-year history.

This vote of confidence in Erdogan and the AKP from Turkey's Kurds is especially significant as it comes at a time when the United States is criticising Turkish policies in northern Syria and claiming that Turkey aims to "slaughter the Kurds" with a military operation in the region.

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Erdogan will view these results as an approval by Kurdish voters towards his war on terror against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a designated terror group which operates in Turkey's southeast, and its Syrian affiliate, the People's Protection Unit (YPG).

We can expect these local results to strengthen Erdogan's hand in talks with the US over a potential safe zone in northeast Syria and lead to more decisive policies by the Turkish government in the region.

After 15 elections in 17 years, Turkey enters a period of electoral tranquillity with no elections foreseen for the next four and a half years. The government has endured election fatigue and this opportunity will allow the AKP party to undertake much needed reforms.

Erdogan's carefully worded post-election speech on Sunday night showed the president heard this message. He talked about the need to prioritise economic reforms, structural reforms, a new economic architecture, unemployment, security and Syria. He also was introspective.

In his speech, Erdogan vowed: "As of tomorrow morning, we will start finding and making up for our shortcomings... There will be no elections for four and a half years. What will we do? We will focus on national and international issues, and hopefully raise our country above the level of our contemporaries."

Clearly, a message to the voters that he hears their concerns, and further understands that without follow through his party may lose further. AKP's long-term success can be attributed to Erdogan's ability to constantly reform and revitalise his party, always keeping it relevant and in touch with the zeitgeist of the country.

The president's Ankara speech shows that while his party may have dipped in the polls, he clearly understands what needs to be accomplished and has signaled that he plans to revamp his party in the upcoming months.

## **United Nations**

### [Turkey – Strengthening Protection of Human Rights](#)

By: Staff Writer

February 19, 2019

Turkey has taken a set of important measures to strengthen the protection of human rights. It established a Human Rights Department within the Ministry of Justice and a Human Rights Compensation Commission. It introduced the possibility of an individual application before the Constitutional Court and an action plan on the prevention of violations of the European Convention Human Rights. Turkey has translated the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and made them available to the public on the website of the Ministry of Justice.

## **Description**

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- \* Establishment of a Human Rights Department within the Ministry of Justice
- \* Introduction of Individual Application before the Constitutional Court
- \* Action Plan on Prevention of Violations of the European Convention Human Rights
- \* Establishment of Human Rights Compensation Commission
- \* Translation of the Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and making them available to the public on the website of the Ministry of Justice.

#### Key results

- \* The ECtHR's workload: By the end of 2014, the number of applications pending before the ECtHR was reduced by 45% compared to 31.12.2012. Furthermore, the number of applications communicated to our Government decreased to 200 in 2014 while it was 422 and 508 respectively in 2012 and 2013.
- \* With regard to the individual application to the Constitution Court, the ECtHR held in one of its judgment that a new, accessible and effective constitutional remedy was introduced into the Turkish legal system.
- \* The Human Rights Compensation Commission delivers averagely 174 decisions in a day.
- \* The High Council of Judges and Prosecutors takes into account the ECtHR judgments that refer to human rights violations relating to judicial decisions of judges and prosecutors with respect to their assessment and promotion.
- \* Translation into Turkish of ECtHR judgments is available on the official web-site of the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Justice (INHAK) and in the HUDOC data-base.

#### Key lessons learnt

Developing and effectively implementing a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy on tackling human rights violations helped us to raise awareness of human rights and rule of law in the judiciary as well as in the society. Furthermore, thanks to the effective implementation of this strategy the number and the scope of the references to ECHR and ECtHR case-law in judicial decisions have increased considerably.

#### Other relevant information

In close cooperation with the European Union and the Council of Europe, projects aiming to raise awareness of Turkish judges and prosecutors on the ECtHR's and international human rights standards have been implemented.

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**The New York Times**

[Turkey Drops Travel Ban for German Journalist](#)

By: Melissa Eddy

August 20, 2018

A Turkish court has ruled that a German journalist facing trial on terrorism-related charges is free to leave the country, a move that could help improve relations between two countries with deep ties.

The journalist, Mesale Tolu, a German of Turkish ancestry who was working in Istanbul, was arrested in April 2017 on charges of spreading propaganda for terrorist organizations. She was held in pretrial detention until December, when she was released but ordered to remain in the country.

Ms. Tolu said on Twitter on Monday that her lawyer had won her permission to travel. "The reports about the lifting of my travel ban are true," she said, thanking those who had worked for her release.

Germany's foreign minister, Heiko Maas, welcomed the decision, calling it "a step toward improving our relations with Turkey." But he insisted that further steps must follow, pointing to at least seven other German citizens who are jailed in Turkey for what Berlin considers political reasons.

Ms. Tolu reminded her supporters on Monday that the court's decision to allow her to leave the country would have no effect on the trial against her and other journalists, including her husband. The trial is scheduled to continue on Oct. 16.

The announcement about Ms. Tolu comes less than a week after a Turkish activist with Amnesty International, Taner Kilic, was released from prison, months after prosecutors revoked a court's decision to free him.

His release, long sought by Germany, renewed hopes that Andrew Brunson, an American pastor currently under house arrest on espionage charges, could soon be set free.

Mr. Brunson's prolonged detention has set off a diplomatic standoff with the United States, during which President Trump ordered a doubling of tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Turkey. The dispute, combined with countermeasures imposed by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has accelerated a fall of the lira, which has lost one-third of its value this year.

Mr. Brunson and Mr. Kilic were among the 11 rights activists detained in a flurry of arrests after a failed coup against Mr. Erdogan's government in 2016.

They all faced charges of aiding terrorist groups, in particular the movement led by Fethullah Gulen, a cleric living in exile in the United States whom Ankara accuses of initiating the coup attempt. The United States has repeatedly refused Turkey's requests to extradite Mr. Gulen.

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Berlin has pushed for the release of its citizens and shifted its policy toward Ankara, announcing a freeze on steps to help Turkey join the European Union.

Mr. Erdogan is set to visit Berlin next month, and talks between the ministers of finance and transport are scheduled before then, German officials said. The meeting has long been planned and could give the governments an opportunity to discuss current developments in Turkey.

But even as journalists and activists who Germany maintained were being held on politically motivated charges were being released, authorities handed stiff sentences to others. After one Turkish court ordered the release of a German-Turkish journalist, Deniz Yucel, in February, another court sentenced six Turkish journalists to life in prison for undermining the constitutional order.

Separately on Monday, the Turkish government reported that shots were fired from a moving car at the United States Embassy in Ankara. "According to first evaluation of the scene, three bullets hit the iron gate and glass entrance lock," the government said in a statement, adding that no one was harmed.

Turkey's official news agency, Anadolu, reported that one person was detained in Ankara. It did not elaborate.

Mr. Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, condemned the attack and insisted that the Turkish government was able to ensure the safety of all foreign missions in the country. "This is a clear attempt to create chaos," Mr. Kalin said on Twitter. "The incident is being investigated and will be clarified as soon as possible."

## Time

### [The West Should Not Underestimate the Strength of Turkey's Democratic Spirit](#)

By: Amanda Sloat

June 22, 2018

This Sunday, Turkish voters will cast ballots for the parliament and president. Elections were originally scheduled for November 2019, but Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan moved them forward 18 months—before an economic slowdown started to bite, the nationalistic pride of military success in Syria faded, and opposition parties got organized.

These elections have particular significance, marking Turkey's transition from a parliamentary to a presidential system. The changes, approved in an April 2017 referendum, abolish the role of prime minister, authorize the president to appoint the cabinet and issue executive orders, and reduce legislative power.

Amid an increasingly authoritarian climate following a failed coup in July 2016, with 160,000 detained and most opposition media outlets shuttered, many view the results as a foregone conclusion. Yet Turkey, for all its flaws, is not Russia. Elections may be imperfect, but they still matter. If not, why bother

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changing the date? Even those who dislike Erdoğan rejected the attempted military putsch in favor of regime change via the ballot box.

Turkey has held reasonably free and fair polls since 1950. In recent years, there have been some allegations of foul play. During November 2015 parliamentary elections, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) noted restrictions on media freedom and limits on some candidates' ability to campaign due to localized violence. In last year's constitutional referendum, the opposition criticized a last minute decision to count contested ballots. Yet notwithstanding any shenanigans, the results reflected a divided country: Erdoğan's party lost its parliamentary majority in June 2015 elections (leading to the November do-over) and the referendum barely passed (51.4 percent for and 48.6 percent against).

To be sure, Sunday's elections will not be "fair." The OSCE's preliminary report cited restrictions on freedom of assembly, association, and expression. The media landscape consists almost exclusively of outlets owned by pro-government businesses. The government has maintained a state of emergency since the coup attempt, which bans demonstrations and protests. The leader of the Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), Selahattin Demirtaş, has been imprisoned along with other party members and officials since November 2016 on spurious terrorism charges; he has attempted to campaign from jail. Changes to election procedures—such as allowing law enforcement to monitor voting, relocating polling stations on security grounds, and counting ballots without official seals—have heightened concerns about potential abuses.

However, these elections will arguably be "free." They are also far more competitive than expected. The recent election and referendum results show Erdoğan is not invincible. He has floundered on the campaign trail, perhaps due to opposition pressure or fatigue. His formation of an alliance (People's Alliance) with the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) indicates concern about his electoral prospects. Most significantly, Erdoğan is vulnerable on the economy—the issue that helped bring his Justice and Development Party (AKP) to power in 2002. Although pocketbook politics has contributed to his continued popularity, opinion polls suggest the economy is voters' top priority; rising inflation and unemployment as well as the lira's 20 percent depreciation against the dollar this year diminish his appeal.

Despite the uneven playing field, Turkey's opposition parties—often criticized for being divided and weak—have energized the country with serious and well-organized campaigns. The social-democratic Republican People's Party (CHP) put forward a dynamic candidate, Muharrem İnce, who has garnered enthusiastic support with promises of improved Western relations and populist economic policies. Meral Akşener broke from the MHP to create the İyi (Good) Party and began effectively challenging Erdoğan. When the earlier election date raised questions about her new party's eligibility to run, the CHP "loaned" 15 legislators to ensure İyi Party had sufficient numbers to form a parliamentary group. These parties (plus two smaller parties) formed an opposition alliance (National Alliance), which could cost the AKP a governing majority. All eyes are on the Kurds: opposition control is more likely if the HDP, which is outside this formal alliance, crosses the 10 percent threshold to enter parliament.

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The election has three possible outcomes: Erdoğan wins, backed in parliament by his party's alliance; one of his opponents wins, supported by the opposition coalition; or there is a mixed result with the president and parliament belonging to different camps.

Although opinion polls in Turkey are unreliable, they generally suggest the third scenario: AKP loses parliament, no presidential candidate secures the requisite 50 percent-plus-one, and a run-off is held on July 8. Although the opposition has agreed to rally behind the second candidate, the safe bet is Erdoğan emerges victorious but weakened. This would create a unique situation in Turkey, with a newly empowered president confronted by a hostile legislature.

Irrespective of the outcome, this snap election campaign has highlighted the resilience of the Turkish public, the fallibility of its long-time leader, and the strength of alternative ideas. Hours after parliament was bombed in the attempted coup, Turkish legislators met there to pass a joint resolution condemning the attack on their democracy. "Despite our political differences," it stated, "we all are on the side of the national will." This election should remind the West yet again not to underestimate the strength of Turkey's democratic spirit.

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